

December 31, 2016

New Year's Eve

Texts for this week's Blended (Traditional) Service:

Numbers 6:22-27 (NIRV)

Galatians 3:23-29 (NIRV)

Luke 2:21 (ESV)



Made New Through His Blessing

- A reflection on Numbers 6:22-27

Intro – On this New Year’s Eve, we pause to reflect on the past year and look forward to the one to come. It’s a time of resolutions and thinking ahead. It’s also the perfect time to reflect on being made new through God, and His blessing – a blessing fulfilled in the Incarnation of Christ.

I. A Word about the text

- a. Numbers 6 is THE significant blessing in Scripture. It’s the blessing given to Aaron, through Moses, by God, himself. It was used in the OT worship of Israel, and we use it, often, today as the closing Benediction.
 - b. To be noted especially, this is NOT a conditional blessing, as in “May the Lord bless you”. It is a PROMISE – the Lord WILL bless you. The text closes this way – “So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”
 - c. The text of the blessing speaks of God’s face being turned toward his people – “the Lord make his face to shine upon you” and “the Lord lift up his countenance upon you”. It is a poetic way of saying – the Lord looks upon you with delight!
- ✓ **Key Point** – The essence of the blessing, given to Aaron and his sons to deliver to God’s people, is a word of promise, grounded in their relationship with God. In this relationship, God protects them and provides for them.

II. A Word about the text for us today

- a. The hard truth is that while God looks upon his people with delight, we are not always delightful people! We sin and – were it not for the grace of God and his great love for us – he would turn his face away from us. But he does not turn away from us, because he turned his face away from JESUS, his only begotten Son, instead.
 - b. It is the gift of God’s Son, for us, that fulfills the promise of the blessing – in Christ, God looks upon us with favor and gives us his peace! He gives us the holy child, love and peace incarnate, for us!
 - c. We are made new through God’s blessing, as we receive Him and let the Spirit of Christ live richly in our lives.
- ✓ **Key Point** – As it was for the OT people of God, so it is for us today, that the blessing of God is grounded in our relationship with him. The difference is Jesus! Through faith in His Son, Jesus, God saves us, and every day protects us and provides for us. While it may not always look that way, it is God’s promise and we know this – the One who has called us is faithful and he will do it!

Closing – As we look ahead to the new year, we do so with faith in the promises of God embedded in this blessing. There is surely no better way to make a new beginning, and to let ourselves be made new, than through the power and promise of God’s Spirit in Christ – “If anyone is in Christ, the old is gone. The new has come!”